

## [Folklore]

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Davis, Nita

Folklore TALES-MISCELLANY

Nita Davis, P.W.

Sanderson, Terrell

District No. 19

TERRELL COUNTY

DISTRICT NO. 19

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File 240

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(Newley collected material

for Special Folklore

Volume.) FOLKLORE RATTLESNAKE ON MY SHIRT BOSOM (By Bill Holcomb)

"I was telling some people from Kansas about this experience with the rattlesnake.

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"I had been riding hard all day and was shore tired. I stopped to rest, unsaddled my horse, hobbled him and laid down on my saddle blanket to sleep. About a half-hour before sun-up next morning, I woke up and found a snake on my shirt bosom.

"What in the world did you do?' Well I did the only sensible thing a person could do. I went back to sleep!

"What?"

"Yes, and/ in about half hour the sun came up, the snake got warm and crawled away and that's all there is to that. ENGLISHMAN'S CALF

Mrs. Mary Stirman contributed the following story:

"Mr. Des Landes was an old Englishman who took up State land many years ago down on the San Francisco Creek.

"He owned sheep, cows, horses, and a few dogs and chickens.

"He was out riding one day and saw a beautiful little spotted baby calf lying under a bush. Dismounting, he picked up the calf to fondle and pet it. In his admiration he forgot the mother cow, so here she comes and gives him a good hook between the shoulders that nearly took his breath away.

"The calf is dropped and scrambles away with its mother, when Carl Clark and Earl Stirman ride up. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas

"Mr. Des Landes explains to them he meant no harm, that the cow misunderstood him, but that he would be very careful and think twice next time for fear the mother cow may be in the 2 brush again." BEAUTIFUL INDIAN HAIR

The following story is told by Mr. Bankhead:

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"I talk to lots of these old Mexicans and hear interesting stories every day that I can spare the time to listen to them.

"This old Mexican died last year. He was 104 years old. He fought with Captain Bullis. Him and another fellow were given orders to spy, but not to fight any Indians.

"They disobeyed the Captain when they saw two Indians at a water hole eating. They killed them, taking their scalps. A price of \$100.00 was on one of the scalps. It was kept in Austin as the most beautiful hair."

Another of Mr. Bankhead's stories follow: TRAIL DRIVER'S SADDLE SHOP

"I have been here in Sanderson since about 1915. My father was an Indian of the two breeds, Iriquois and Cherokee. My mother was a Portuguese, so I learned how to read by signs and drawings. Maps are brought in here every once in a while for me to read or translate the stories. People are looking for buried treasures and wish to know if these drawings indicate hidden treasure.

"Indians didn't use gold, since it was an evil omen to them. Their art was working brass or silver.

"This is the good luck sign in this country. Joe Wilson, at the Cunningham ranch on the Independence, has just drawn off some drawings for me to read, but as far as they indicate, there is no buried or hidden treasures." OUR COUNTY'S FIRST AUTOMOBILE

The contribution of Mr. Hunter is as follows:

"Our county's first car was owned by N. H. Corder, an Apperson, Jack-rabbit model. He was manager for the big Canyon ranch at the time. 3 Now Mr. Corder predicted the car would be a great help to the ranchmen, when ever they needed a windmill part, one could

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save so much time by using the car, that wagons, buggies and hacks could be used on the place to go short distances.

“He didn't realize that the ranchmen would move into town and use the car merely to go out to see how the ranch was getting along, nor that the car was the real down fall of the cowboy.

“Some think Ed McGinley was the proud owner of the first automobile here. It was a Studebaker, and that Dr. Hudson was next to buy a Flanders. Now only a very few don't have cars. Strange how the horse has passed away.”

Another story by Mr. Hunter: PAINTED ROCK SPRINGS

“Painted Rock Springs was an old Indian camp nine hundred years ago. It is on the old Indian Trail that goes into Mexico at the mouth of Reagan Canyon.

“In 1878 Captain Bullis had made a survey of this spring, having bought up land scrip at five cents per acre. Bullis also located Geddis Springs and bought many acres near Shafter Crossing. He thought some day all this land would be valuable.

“The joke is, that some of this land isn't worth any more than five cents per acre from that day to this.

“This Painted Rock Springs was later renamed by some of Captain Bullis' officers and is now know as Meyers' Springs.” WHAT DID YOU CATCH?

Mary Cox Yoas tells us a story:

“I was living on the ranch with my father. He had gone hunting early one morning and during his absence the regular duties of the ranch took place.

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"He returned from his hunt about eleven o'clock that morning. The process of cooking dinner was under way and we 4 were in the kitchen. He came in, walked up and down the room several times. Then he asked, 'Why don't you ask me what I caught?' None of us answered the question at the time. Papa walked over to the water bucket, got himself a drink of cool water. He was thoroughly disgusted with every one.

"I guess I ought not to kill these panthers anyway."

"Why, Papa, is that what you killed this morning?"

"Yes, and not any of you seemed to care."

"Why Papa, that is fine. We just forgot it's been so long since you have really killed anything. It's been so dry lately and you have failed so many times.

"We certainly asked the question, 'What did you catch?' next time.

"His stories were more or less the same from time to time, his dogs put up a fine fight, the animal was killed, bayed or treed. He killed wolves by the thousand during his hunting days, bob cats, fox, panthers, and smaller animals. Papa always kept an excellent pack of dogs, from the time he was a boy nine years old, something over sixty years of his life was spent out in the big out of doors.

"Now he tells of hunt after hunt, while he is confined to his bed, being eighty-two years old, recalling memories during his "second childhood days." But always, 'What did you catch?' is the question to ask him." A RATTLESNAKE

This story is by George Adams, a negro.

"Weel now, Mr. Pat as you done tole me 'bout Mr. Bill's story of a rattlesnake, I heard something about being still myself one time. Me and another fellow was sleeping out on

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the ground under a tree. That fellow punches me and says in a whisper, 'George, a snake is crawlin' across our bed, lay real 5 quiet and keep still.'

"Well, I lay there a few minutes and thinks to mahsef, 'I is jist got to know if that snake is a comin' or goin'. So I can't stand this no longer. I throwed my hands over my head and gives a big jump, them covers throwed that snake three feet from our bed and he crawls off in another direction.

"I says to that other colored boy, 'Say what do you think I is any way? I can't play dead like you does. I just have to know where that snake is." TOURIST

Mr. J. W. Carpenter has a story to tell:

"A party made a short order at the lunch counter. They seemed to be in a big hurry so finally one of the ladies says, 'Please do hurry, we want to get to El Paso before dark. I am so afraid of Mexican bandits, and rattlesnakes. [Do?] the snakes really get on your cars?' The reply was, 'Lady you won't be much safer after you reach El Paso.' "I think they turned their car and went back East after that. But you see there is no danger, perhaps the party was as safe on our highway as they would have been in the city of El Paso.

"In 1920 the State marked a highway through Sanderson. it is now a very excellent road, paved most of the way to our big cities." UNDER THE FEED BOX

Dick McDonald's story follows:

"I worked for Mr. Raysor who was a sickly man who owned a grocery store here. He had hired me to help take care of his little two-year-old son, Tom Jr. and help with the chores around the place.

"I was only about ten years old myself, at the time. 6 On Friday and Saturday, I delivered the groceries in the old delivery wagons driving an old roan horse, while the Mexican, who

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was the regular delivery man, worked in the store. His name was Potaso, a Mexican about twenty-five years old.

"I came driving in shortly after dinner, drove into the corral. I noticed one of the feed boxes was lopsided, due to one of the posts having decayed. I decided to fix it, so got a crow-bar and a cedar post. After digging about a five inch hole, I dug into what was once an old buck-skin sack, filled with money. I filled my hat with silver coins. Seems that I remember some of the coin as being very large silver dollars, much larger than our present dollars.

"I raised up to find Potaso standing there watching me. He says, 'That ain't your money it belongs to me. You trying to steal it from me.' I will always remember that much of the story. Potaso frightened me and made me promise not to say anything about this to anyone. He said he wouldn't tell my mama and papa if I would do this, so that was the proposition.

"Two years later, I thought about this and decided to tell my father who was indeed angry because I had not told him. He tried to locate this Mexican and found that he had left Sanderson and gone to El Paso, where he had started a grocery store with this money. He returned and took all of this buried treasure, and placed the post to the feed box in its proper position, himself.

"My father even went to El Paso to see this Mexican, but found that the Mexican had died from Tuberculosis, contracted from the old storekeeper, Mr. Raysor.

"You see how near I missed my chance of getting rich, by looking under the feed box and trying to right the lopsided old box." 7 A SHEEP

This sheep story was contributed by Mrs. Van Casey.

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““I cut this out of the paper to give to you, Nita, because Sanderson was the post office for Mr and Mrs Kinsey for years even if Pecos and Brewster Counties claim him now as their residents.”

She then showed the writer an article which she had cut out of the local newspaper, describing a peculiar sheep that had four horns and had wool like an Angora goat. The owner, Mr. Al Kinsey, had said that he would like to sell the sheep for show purposes, and donate a part of the money received for the animal, to San Angelo flood sufferers.

“Don't you think that was nice of him to want to help the flood sufferers by offering them half the price he got for the sheep?

“Yes, but Al says he has a kindly eye and doesn't mean any harm, well I've seen that type of eye before and it can mean more trouble than you could think up in years. Some of these old Billies and rams sure can be mean sometimes.

“I had hung the family washing out one morning, and hung a sheet on the wire sheep-proof fence that was around the old ranch house. I heard a funny noise and looked out the window and saw this old ram butting the sheet with all the force he could manage. Well, if I wanted a sheet I must bring it in and rehang it in the yard. I pulled the sheet off the fence and here came the ram with such force that down went the fence post and over the wire came the ram. Did I run? I should say so, and barely got in the house and slammed the door, when bump went the door. My father rode his horse up about this time, roped the ram and tied him to a post.

“You couldn't tell much about that sheep's kindly eye.” Davis, Nita

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Bibliography



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File 900 FOLKLORE

A. Bill Holcolm, trapper, age unknown, Sanderson, Texas. Interviewed December 1, 1936.

B. Mrs. Mary Stirman, rancher, age unknown, Sanderson, Texas. Interviewed December 1, 1936.

C. Mr. Bankhead, saddle shop owner, age unknown, Sanderson, Texas. Interviewed December 2, 1936.

D. Mr. Charles Hunter, Land Surveyor, age unknown, Sanderson, Texas. Interviewed December 3, 1936.

E. Mary Cox Yoas, rancher, age 40, Sanderson, Texas. Interviewed December 4, 1936.

F. George Adams, negro, ranch hand, age 90, Sanderson, Texas. Interviewed December 4, 1936.

G. Mr. J. W. Carpenter, cafe owner, age 48, Sanderson, Texas. Interviewed December 5, 1936.

H. Dick McDonald, laborer, age 36, Sanderson, Texas. Interviewed November 8, 1936.

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I. Mrs. Van Casey, ranch lady, age 42, Sanderson, Texas. Interviewed November 30, 1936.